563 all over the Soviet Union. These communities, recognizable not only for their German names, were nationally very exclusive (this for economic considerations to a large degree), and had preserved many features of 18th century German peasant life. It is improbable that the German communities exist today.

Multanis

• 178
177 On the peninsula of Apsheron, near Surakhany, 20 km. east of Baku, a small old fire temple is found, in the midst of a pentagon which once was a kind of monastery for the fire worshippers. This pentagon, with a little square grey temple, is usually called Ātashgāh ("Place of the Fire"), as the Persians designate the Zoroastrian sanctuaries. All around this Atashgah, the oil derricks rise to the sky, in the midst of surface piping and oil puddles. During the 18th century and the first half of the 19th, the Atashgah was a much-visited goal of pilgrims from western India, which for a long time—at least from the 16th century on—had maintained very close commercial relations with Azerbaidjan. Thus, the Parsis seem to have rediscovered the Sacred Spot where the Holy Fire leaps forth from the earth, as had been known from times immemorial. Hence the name Azerbaidjan, meaning in Pahlavi (in the form of Ādar-baδgān) "The home of the fire"; hence the erection of the little temple in which the Holy Flame could be venerated. Not long

178 177 after the oil industry had begun to exploit the wells of Apsheron, natural gas was also made use of, with the result that after 1887, the regular religious services at the temple were discontinued. Above the entrance to the fire temple there is a Sanskrit inscription set into the wall, although upside down; however, the inscription does not contain any data as to the erection of the temple or of the particular place in India with which it was intimately connected.

101 177 The fire worshippers of Surakhany were called Multani, and though no literary sources on this name have come to my attention, this is a hint as to the origin of these fire worshippers, who may have come from the city of Multan on the Chenab, a tributary of the Indus in present-day Pakistan. Evidently, this city was the home of the Parsi founders of that trading colony in or near Baku. These Multānī could hardly be called a national minority in the Caucasus; they are to be considered rather as temporary residents, unlike the Greeks of the ancient Ionian colonies.

Conclusion. Ethnical History

174 Thus, we see the older inhabitants of the Caucasus living in the higher regions of the Great Caucasus and in Dagestan and the southern and southwestern parts of Trans-Caucasia. These peoples have been living in the Caucasus since pre-historic times. In many instances, we can distinguish among them early and more

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FOLK RELIGION

C. G. 771 177 The major religions in the Caucasus are Christianity (Georgians except Adzhar and Ingilo; Armenians except Hemshily; Ossetes except Digor; Udi) and Islam (all the rest, except the Mountain Jews and Yezid). But many traces of the older pagan religious view remain. Among the mountaineers in the N. W. Caucasus Islam was introduced comparatively recently (seventeenth century), and in many cases reached only the upper classes. In Dagestan, with its stronger Islamic tradition, the ancient beliefs have disappeared to a much larger extent. In Georgia, Christianity has absorbed many pagan features, and among the Kartvelian mountaineers it was rather paganism that adopted certain outward characteristics of Christianity. In the N. W. Caucasus, the pre-Islamic pagan religion preserved curious vestiges of Christianity which had been introduced from Georgia in the time of queen Tamar, and perhaps even earlier. Here and there in the Caucasus there are remains of the influence of Zoroastrianism.

C. G. 778 The old Caucasian religion was closely connected with family and sib organization. It centered around the house-hearth, above which hung the cooking pot, suspended from an iron chain (Georg. sak'ide(be)li), which had a symbolic value and was believed to be endowed with supernatural powers. It could not

C. G. 778 be sold; touching chain or kettle gave one the status of a guest; to throw the kettle out of the hut was a supreme insult which could even require blood vengeance.

Besides the cult of the hearth, the veneration of trees was widespread in the Caucasus. The pagan cult had its rites and community prayers and offerings, and these were usually performed near a sacred grove or tree. In all Georgia there are sacred groves and trees near the Christian churches and sanctuaries. No one was allowed to cut down these trees, or to cut off a single branch, even in areas where wood was scarce, as this would entail the wrath of God.

C. G. 776 In Georgia there are traces of the worship of a Mother-god; under the name "mother of the soil" (adgilis deda) a female deity of the earth is worshipped. In the many legends about Queen Tamar, who has a place in the pantheon of the Pshav, elements of the same cult have been preserved. A deity of the woods, protector of wild animals, is called T'q'ashi mapa ("king of the woods") by the Mingrelians, Apsat (borrowed from Osset Awsati) by the Svan, Ochop'int'e by the Khevsur, Amvepsha by the Abkhaz, Mezith ("forest-god") by the Circassians. The latter two peoples also knew a patron of the smiths, fire and iron (Abkh. Shoshu, Circ. Tlepsh). There were numerous other deities: of natural phenomena (sun, moon,

C. G. 776 thunder), often identified with Christian saints (e.g. the god of thunder with St. Elias or St. George); patrons of agriculture, of cattle breeding, of horsemen, of thieves, etc.; and also a large array of spirits, angels, witches, and wood-giants; and finally a variety of superstitions, of which may be mentioned C. G. [754] the fear of the "evil eye."

The religious worship of the Georgian C G mountain tribes has reverted to their ancient tribal religion, veiled by Christian terminology. [778] Their places of worship, called khat'i "icon" or dzhvari "cross," are small huts of rough stones, mostly standing in sacred groves. Their only adornment are pieces of cloth or horns of the Caucasian capricorn as votive offerings. The same words denote also the supernatural power residing in these huts; it is conceived as a sort of mediator between mankind and the supreme god called Morige "he who allots, distributes." Each village and each clan have their khat'i, and each tribe, too, had a common khat'i; e.g., that of the Pshav is called Lashris dzhvari, that of the Mtiul Lomisas dzhvari. Every member of the clan considers himself a "serf" (q'ma) of the khat'i, which may send him success, or disease and death. Each khat'i possessed pastures, arable land and woods where it was C. G. forbidden to fell a single tree. Attached to 793 it was a body of functionaries who were appointed temporarily or held their office by

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C. G. 771 [783] Traces of Zoroastrianism are preserved in the idea of the uncleanness of women, especially when menstruating or with child, and of corpses, as found among the Georgian mountaineers; further in some Georgian words, e. g. dzhodzhokheti "hell" (cf. M. Pers. dushakhw). Remnants of Christianity in the C. G. [778] N. W. Caucasus were the custom of planting a cross in the ground near a sacred grove, or hanging it in a sacred tree before a C. G. [805] ceremony; further the seven-day week and the names of the days, which are partly translations or mutilations of Greek names. In Abkhazia a number of Byzantine churches have been preserved.

c.o. 776 seem to be the same sort of angel. Strangely enough, God hesitated for some time before granting the requests of these groups to punish the brutal attackers.

It seems evident that the original conception of the Vastyrdzhi and Vatsilla in the popular religion of the Ossets was that of two members of the host of tutelary spirits and this conception is still distinctly recognizable, although they have been elevated to the rank of Christian saints. There is very little doubt that the relation between the Narti heroes and these two tutelary spirits, as it appears in the Narti legends, is the result of an arbitrary distortion of the original conception.

The Ossets worship two other saints: Tutyr, the protector and ruler of wolves, who obviously is identical with Saint Theodore, and the wonderworking, miraculous killer Nikkola who corresponds to Saint Nicholas.

c.o. 796 Besides their Christian and Mohammedan holidays, the Ossets celebrate a number of festivals of pagan character which are dedicated to their popular gods, or rather, spirits. They make the distinction between "male" and "female" c.o. festivals. The male festivals are attended only [782] by men offering bloody sacrifices, whereas at the female festivals which are celebrated only by women, the sacrificial gifts consist of milk c.o. and cheese. Some of the feasts are celebrated at 796 home, others at or near places considered 778 sacred, such as mountain plateaus, caves, groves, or trees. Among the sacred places and

C. O. 796 777 objects the dzuar enjoys the highest degree of reverence. The word dzuar is of Georgian origin and means "the cross," then "the saint," and further "a sanctuary." Churches are often built at the side of, or in the place of, such old sanctuaries, the most famous of which, Rekom, is situated between the village Zai and the Zai glacier. It is described as a very small, low, square room with two tiny windows. The roof is covered with straw, the walls and ceilings are adorned with old rugs and priestly garments. There are all kinds of things on the floor, such as images of saints, candles, jewelry, arrows, etc., and similar things are also to be seen outside of the sanctuary. In the immediate neighborhood there are numerous stone houses covered with plank roofs serving as shelters for the pilgrims who stay there for two weeks from the first Saturday in May, sacrificing, eating, dancing and singing.

C. O. 796 782 At the Ossets' festivals the killing of animals is accompanied by appropriate sacrificial hymns. The sacrifice is performed by the eldest member of the assembly who, before the slaughtering, burns the sign of the cross on the animal's muzzle and behind its right ear with a glowing coal. A special feature of festivals is the drinking of K'umäl, the native beverage of millet, araq, brandy, and bägäny, beer. The flesh of the animal is eaten, the bones piled up in a heap, the blood is collected in a vessel and buried, and the animal's head is hung on a tree. The sacrifice in honor of

C. O. [273]

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turn, must have stimulated the entire family to watch most carefully over the conduct of their daughters; and this watchfulness, again, must have been responsible for *adats* threatening the girl as well as any lover with the most severe sanctions not only for an actual perforation of the hymen but also, as the *adats* frequently express it, for any "suspicious approach."[109]

There have been other explanations offered for the virginity test. Westermarck, for instance, suggested masculine jealousy.[110] But this explanation is not applicable to the peoples of North Caucasia, for, as we have already mentioned, the sexual factor has very little significance in the selection of mates compared to the all-important economic, social, and religious factors. Such a jealousy, where mutual attraction matters so little, is unthinkable.[111]

(6) The custom of the bride thrice walking round the fireplace is an ancient wedding ceremony frequently found among pastoral tribes. As is well known, it was also the custom of the ancient Indo-Europeans. That one of the main wedding ceremonies in the Caucasus should take place at the fireplace is quite in keeping with the deep religious significance of the hearth. Among a large number of Caucasian mountain tribes, especially in North Ossetia, Ingushetia, and Daghestan, we find the custom of never allowing the fire in the hearth to die out, this practice being a form of cult for the dead.[112] The fire and especially the chain above it constitute a connection between the living and the departed. It forms a sacred asylum for any murderer, because as soon as he touches the chain the ancestors of the victim approve of the murderer's adoption into the family. The chain is the symbol of the family: to tear it down is regarded as one of the most abominable crimes imagineable, an insult to the living and dead members of the sib, which must be punished with death. The chain is a symbol of the family and therefore it must be buried with the last member of an extinct sib. To swear by the hearth-chain is an infallible sign that the person is saying the truth, for to do so falsely is unthinkable.[113] Such an oath would be a curse upon the entire sib and their ancestors. In other words, the ancient solidarity of the sib is intimately connected with the ancient religion of the North Caucasians, and the sanctuary of this religion is the hearth. Now, marriage is an act by which a stranger is taken into the family, and one of the most natural means, most in harmony with the ancient Caucasian form of life, is the hearth and hearth-chain. It is indeed striking that in Daghestan the cult of the fireplace still exists today but not the wedding ceremony. This fact confirms rather than disproves our explanation, for in Daghestan the wife was not a stranger: she had to be chosen from within the sib! (Cf. *supra*, pp. 51 f.)

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[109] *Infra*, Chapter XII, p. 176.

[110] The History of Marriage, I, p. 163.

[111] The jealousy would have to be so great that the disappointed husband would insist that the bride's nose be cut off or that she be otherwise mutilated and even killed, for such are the ancient adats!

[112] Günther, "Zusammenstöße zwischen Gesetz und Gewohnheitsrecht im nördlichen Kaukasus," *Zeitschrift f. vergl. Rechtsw.*, XLVI (1931), p. 324.

[113] *ibid.*

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Summing up the results of our comparitive study we may say:

(1) It seems that at one time divorce was an exclusive right of the husband, almost everywhere in North Caucasus.

(2) Throughout the Caucasus, the husband has the right to dismiss his wife *at will*. The most arbitrary divorces are recognized by customary law as valid.

(3) The *adats* always make a distinction between a merely *valid* divorce and a divorce that is both valid and *justifiable*.

(4) Although the divorce rights enjoyed by the women do not equal those enjoyed by the men, the rights of the former have greatly increased, mainly through Islamic and Russian influence.

(5) The inequality lies mainly in the grounds which render a divorce justifiable.

(6) After a divorce the children remain with the father. In a word, the divorce laws are again typical of a patriarchal society.

In conclusion, it may be interesting to note how the fireplace, which played such an important part in the marriage ceremonies of the North Caucasians, is not overlooked when a marriage is dissolved. By walking round the hearth three times, the new bride got in touch with the groom's ancestors and thus officially became a member of the household. Though the fireplace ceremony is very rare in Northeastern Caucasia, it seems to play an important part in the dissolution of marriage. Thus in certain localities of Daghestan, when a woman is declared divorced, she goes to the hearth, takes a handful of ashes and throws them into the wind.[44] It may very well be that the relation of the fireplace and divorce has been overlooked by the explorers. By scattering the ashes she is perhaps trying to undo what she did by walking round the fireplace on her wedding day or shortly after. Even though the two practices may not coincide today (i. e., locally), the possibility that they did coexist formerly is not excluded.

Finally, a word about an institution closely resembling divorce, mentioned by J. G. Georgi in his *Beschreibung aller Nationen des russischen Reichs, ihrer Lebensart, Religion, Gebräuche, Wohnungen, Kleidung und übrigen Merkwürdigkeiten* (1776) which includes among the "Merkwürdigkeiten" the so-called *trial marriages* of the Cherkess. Within a given time the wife had to prove her fertility, otherwise the union would be dissolved. Recently similar temporary or trial marriages have been discovered in Ossetia.[45]

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[44] Cf. Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 201.

[45] Ladyženskij, "Zur Erforschung der Rechtsgewohnheiten der Bergvölker des Kaukasus," *Zeitsch. f. Ethnologie*, LXII (1930), p. 232, note 1.